

# CHILDREN IN THE SKY. FLYING DREAMS IN THE FANTASY FILMS OF THE 1980S

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## **Abstract**

The article focuses on the analysis of fantasy films of the 1980s, in which the element of children's magical flight is featured. Significantly, the aeronautical orientation of 1980s popular cinema is not just a charming trick or a flashy attraction. It points to a specific meaning: the opposition to growing up. In the text, the author distances herself from the theory of Sigmund Freud, who considers the dream of flying to be synonymous with infantile, unfulfilled sexual desires. Drawing on the ideas of psychoanalysts of dreams and fairy tales (Gaston Bachelard, Brigitte Brun), the author argues that the young protagonists of these films escape adolescence by flying. In the cinema of the 1980s, magical flights still took place under the silent guidance of Peter Pan.

**KEYWORDS:** *1980s fantasy films, flying fantasies, flying children, psychoanalytic dream interpretation, the child in cinema*

*Bed, where are you flying to?  
I went to sleep  
nearly an hour ago,  
and now I'm on a porch  
open to the stars!  
Rita Dove (1999: 65)*

A lot of fantasy films of the 1980s revealed an aerial imagination; dreams of flying are a recurring element in the films of this period. The motif had been present for decades in children's novels and cinema<sup>1</sup>. However, in the 1980s, it grew into a key topos. In 1982 alone, there were three children's films in which the dream of flying was manifested. The first was the 3D production *Magic Journeys* (dir. Lerner), showing children flying over seas and meadows. In the British animated film, *The Snowman* (dir. Jackson), the climax of the action is the flight of the boy and the snowman from the back garden. The third example is that of the midair bike rides from Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. The poetics of the sublime and the conventions of the fantastic are evident in each of these visions. Also, in all of the aforementioned films, the visual aspects are quite similar: we see children flying through the colorful or starry sky, accompanied by a magical friend. This visual code, an image of a child flying through the night sky with a fantasy creature, had been established in children's media long before the fantasy films of the 1980s.

The figure of Peter Pan should be noted in this context. The eternal boy trope is crucial for the analysis of dreams about flying in children's stories. In the story of Peter Pan, as the literary studies scholar Jerome Griswold observes, flying is associated with youth, and losing lightness is the price of getting older (2006: 81). The children of the 1980s fantasy films detach themselves from the ground as a result of losing themselves in fantasy and dreams. Enchantment with the possibilities offered by imagination lifts the characters up into the air. The flights follow the instruction that Peter Pan once gave children: "You just think lovely, wonderful thoughts and they lift you up in the air" (Barrie, 1950: 47). In the films of the 1980s, children fly with the help of magical friends, wonderful transport machines, or spontaneously, carried by an anti-gravitational force. In any case, they always glide, thinking "lovely, wonderful thoughts". If they can't fly, they fantasize about it, sometimes before bedtime, surrounded by tiny aircraft models.

The aim of the paper is to analyze 1980s children's fantasy films in opposition to the classical Freudian interpretation. According to Sigmund Freud, dreams about flying give expression to repressed childish desires to do what adults do (in other words: to be able to have sexual intercourse). Freudian theory reduces children's flying fanta-

<sup>1</sup> The motif of flying in children's cinema is, of course, not only specific to American films from the 1980s. This is evidenced by films such as *Clouds of Glass* (dir. 1958) by František Vlácil or *Paper Bird* (dir. 1972) and *Learning to Fly* (dir. 1978) by Sławomir Idziak, which lyrically portray children's fantasies of flying. In the European cinema of the 1980s, the dream of flying was revealed in *Mio in the Land of Faraway* (dir. Grammatikov, 1987), in which a lonely boy makes his way to a fantasy land clinging to the beard of a djinn.

sies to the infantile fantasy of being a grown-up. In this case, the bird and flying are associated with sex, following the principle that, in some languages, the penis is called a bird (Freud, 1916: 107). Children are also told that babies are brought by storks. According to the psychoanalyst, only boys, or rather boyish men in contact with the phallic mother, can have these kinds of fantasies. In the films I have analyzed, boys are in the majority, as they were in all of the children's films of the 1980s. In some cases, however, girls are also able to fly, the best illustration of which is the character of Dorothy from *Return to Oz* (dir. Murch, 1985). For this reason alone, the Freudian explanation of dreams of flying may not be compatible with the cinematic flying children – both girls and boys.

On the other hand, Gaston Bachelard writes that “oneiric flight is often – contrary to what is taught by classic psychoanalysis – pure voluptuousness” (Bachelard, 1988: 68). Bachelard's theory seems designed to analyze children's stories. One of the basic assumptions in Bachelard's psychoanalysis is that anyone with an imagination can reach the core of childhood through poetic dream. In this article, we will follow the Bachelardian interpretation, and read 1980s films featuring dream flights as the articulation of a refusal to grow up: a desire to stay a child forever. Just like Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

## **Aeroplanes in a children's bedroom**

In fantasy films, the aerial child is often a child who is physically anchored to their bed. There is an aeronautical orientation to the evening rituals that take place in the boys' bedrooms. One such moment appears in Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun* (1987). Although it is not a typical fantasy film, it contains stylistic elements one might associate with Spielbergian fantasy. Andrew Gordon notes that the film is marked by a particular quality. A few scenes have a “fantastic or dreamlike” quality, and the whole movie resembles the “texture of a dream” (Gordon, 2002: 112). This peculiar fantasy convention is communicated in the opening scene; we are looking at close-ups of model planes from the boy's bedroom. Kites and rows of gliders can be seen over the heads of Jim and his parents. The thought of flying also appears in the characters' dialogue. The awakened boy tells his mother of a dream about God and asks questions like “Can I take my glider?”; “If God is above us, does it mean up, like flying?”. The mother tries to bring an end to the conversation, saying “Dream of flying” when she wishes the boy goodnight. As the parents leave, the boy looks up. In the dark room, the camera shows aircraft models in close-up from a low angle shot. Airplanes swing

from the ceiling, moved by the gust of air created by closing the door. Or is it the child's imagination that moves them?

At the beginning of the Disney film *The Blue Yonder* (Rosman, 1985), we see a similar situation. The falling asleep scene begins with a shot of an airplane. A moment later, it turns out to be a close-up of a poster hanging in the boy's bedroom. The walls of the room are filled with pictures of gliders, and there are model airplanes hanging from the ceiling. The owner of this bedroom, like Jim from *Empire of the Sun*, dreams of flying. Before going to sleep, the boy paints the wings of a small airplane blue. He reacts reluctantly to his mother's orders ("Come on, pilot, under the covers!"). Once in bed, he forms a blanket fort out of his bedding and admires the photographs of his pilot grandfather. The scene ends almost identically to the one in Spielberg's film. The camera moves gently, lingering with evident admiration over the model aircraft wrapped in the darkness of the child's bedroom. One gets the impression that the tiny plane is about to take off.

A representative example of children's dreams of flying is depicted in the American-Japanese animation *Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland* (dir. Hata, Hata, 1989). The film is a free adaptation of the comic strips by Winsor McCay, a cartoonist and pioneer of cinematic animation, whose work appeared in the early twentieth century. In both cinema and comics, McCay became known as a dreamer. In his stories, unusual situations, such as flying houses and beds, happen in dreams. McCay was particularly famous for his colorful comic strips featuring Nemo. The scenario was repetitive: the boy dreams of a monarchical land or a fantasy city, and wakes up when the dream becomes too intense. A recurring element is also the admonishment of the little sleeper by his parents for being lazy, sleeping too soundly, fidgeting in bed, or nighttime gluttony. Parental and child perspectives are constantly diverging. This can be seen, for instance, in the way the boy and his parents experience the space of the house. Scott Bukatman writes about this, describing the comic as:

not only a child's imaginative sensibility but also a child's experience of space, with its dialectics of safety and danger, the homey (*heimlich*) and the uncanny (*unheimlich*). Bachelard writes that the poet or author "attracts us to the center of the house as though to a center of magnetic force, into a major zone of protection." In *Little Nemo* that central zone of protection is surely Nemo's bed: in fact, it is pretty much the only part of the house with which we become familiar. The bed—with its thick comforters and walls of pillows, the safety to be found under its covers, and the possibilities for dreaming that it encourages—is a site of profound cathection. [...]. Nemo's family will never see Nemo's bed

as anything other than a bed, while for Nemo the bed is the vehicle, sometimes metaphorical and sometimes literal, that transports him to the wondrous Slumberland. (Bukatman, 2012: 96)

The Nemo cartoons contained a distinctive script and narrative frame (falling asleep and waking up, which frames the adventure part), as well as an ideology (the child as a dreamer, the parents as the guardians of the order of the day). Such a division can still be found in children's films. Nemo, who is lectured by his mother and father on sleep hygiene, is one of those imaginative heroes misunderstood by their parents. According to the children's culture researcher Lara Saguisag, the series of strips about a dreaming boy presented the child as a fantasist who penetrates secret worlds inaccessible to adults (2018: 114-141). Significantly, the comic strip, as a visual medium, presents in a visual form those areas of children's imagination that are inaccessible to adults. The medium of film plays a similar role: it visualizes children's fantasies, imaginative creations, magical visions, nightmares, and sweet dreams<sup>2</sup>.

The opening sequence of the film adaptation of the comic focuses on the boy's dreams. The bed, which Bukatman writes about in the context of the comic, serves a similar function in the film – it is both a safe nest and an exciting flying vehicle. In the first shots, we see a child's bedroom at night. The room is moody and mysterious. Some parts of the bedroom are drowning in darkness. A streak of moonlight enters through a window on one side. The window in the children's dream narratives is, according to Katarzyna Slany, "the typical mediating line between the 'children's room' and the dreamland" (Slany, 2016: 243). In films from the 1980s featuring oneiric flights, the window encourages the dreamer to go outside.

<sup>2</sup> Animated films played a special role in presenting children's fantasies of flying. It was not until the Disney animated version of Peter Pan (*Peter Pan*, 1953, H. Luske et al.) that such flight was convincingly portrayed. Previously, both on stage and in live-action screen adaptations, the impression was spoiled by the ropes visible in the frames supporting the 'flying' actors (Staples, 2007: 741).

## Flying beds

A window and a bed is a combination that often appears in stories about flying boys and girls<sup>3</sup>. These are the elements that allow a dream flight. In the animated film *In the Night Kitchen* (dir. Deitch, 1987), little Mickey, after falling asleep, floats towards the window and glides like a plane under the stars. Slany wrote that Maurice Sendak's literary original reveals the fantasy of a child's dreamlike flight as "a way of sensually exploring the mysteries of the night" (Slany, 2016: 243). The window encouraging the dreamer to fly also appears in *Lady in White* (dir. LaLoggia, 1987). What is unique about it is that it is not a bedroom window but a school window, located in a ghostly corridor. In one scene, a pupil, after falling asleep, rises above the town in the company of ghosts.

In *Little Nemo...*, the window is one of the more significant motifs. Not only is it the exit gate for the bed-vehicle, but it is also the gateway through which the dream characters enter the room. The image of the window also forms the link that connects the first shot to the finale. In the introductory sequence, the camera gently moves across the ceiling, showing models of planes. The propellers spin lightly, the wings make slow movements. Fantasies of flying, as in *Empire of the Sun* and *The Blue Yonder*, are shown through miniatures of planes and aircraft. Stephen Holden wrote in a review for *The New York Times* about the successful attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the comic book original, which consists precisely of bedroom scenery – vintage models of planes and flying machines (Holden, 1992: 13). The most extraordinary phenomenon, however, is the floating bed. At the beginning of the film, the legs of the bed rise from the floor, the window is opened, and a flying vehicle flies out. Nemo experiences a false awakening; he admires the dormant city, rides above the clouds, and finally falls directly under the wheels of a speeding train. At this point, the boy wakes up (this time for real). He is in his room, with a toy locomotive lying at his feet. Is it the big train from the nightmare? The dreamwork transforms toys from the real world into large, dreamlike machines.

The flying bed is a relatively new motif in children's cultural texts. Maria Nikolaeva notices it in children's literature written in the mid-twentieth century. She points out that the flying bed, like the flying rocking chair or mechanical devices as magical objects, does not represent a complete novelty, but more an updated version of the archetype from ancient fairy tales, legends, and myths. Nikolajeva describes such 'new images', characteristic of the practices of postmodernism, as kenotypes:

<sup>3</sup> In the stories of Peter Pan, the window is a very important symbol. Wendy and her brothers get out of bed and fly out of the window. In contrast, Peter's mother closing the window symbolises the impossibility of returning home and thus growing up (Rudd, 2006: 268).

Quite a special use of kenotypes is the appearance of modern gadgets as magical objects in fantasy novels: trains taking characters into the past, elevators going straight into other worlds, the flying bed in Mary Norton's *The Magic Bed-Knob* (1945) or the flying rocking chair in Barbara Sleigh's *The Kingdom of Carbonel* (1960). These patterns are transformations, or better still, deconstructions, of archetypal narrative elements such as horses, boats, flying carpets—that is, traditional means of transportation in myths and folktales. (Nikolajeva, 2017: 150).

According to Nikolajeva, the flying bed is a modern version of the flying carpet. A similar proposition is put forward by Marina Warner (2012). This author of a book on transformations of narrative elements from *Tales from the Arabian Nights* draws attention to the magical motif of flying. She points out that soaring above the ground is a recurring feature of dreams, and its nature evokes specific sensations: intoxication, incorporeality, pleasure, and vertigo (Warner: 330-331). This motif used in stories can be a metaphor for dreams, ecstasy, dream fulfilment, and erotic pleasure.

In *Tales from the Arabian Nights*, the flying is done by adults who travel on sofas or carpets. A few centuries later, however, flying became an activity undertaken by children. The age of the readers of stories about flying has also changed. As science and technology began to realize the dream of flying, literary fantasies “left the boudoir and the parlour for the nursery” (Warner: 354). Warner writes that the flight motif from the Arabian Nights continues with characters such as Peter Pan, Mary Poppins, the children in Edith Nesbit's novel *The Phoenix and the Carpet*, and Nemo from McCay's comic strip. It would be impossible to list all the juvenile flying characters; since the beginning of the twentieth century, children's aerial literature has “proliferated furiously” (Warner: 356). Flying is thus an ancient motif of fairy tales and myths, but as a typically childish predisposition, it was born around the beginning of the 20th century. It was also quickly adapted by children's cinema, as we know, for example, from Maurice Tourneur's *The Blue Bird* (1918).

In the 1980s, there was a renaissance in cultural texts about children who fly in their dreams. In the pop culture of this period, just as in the children's literature of the early twentieth century, flight often originates in the child's bedroom. It is initiated during sleep or just before falling asleep. Therefore, it is linked to the bed as a sphere of sleep, rest, and dreams. The soothing associations connected with the image of a child on a flying bed were used in the promotional video for the Ruxpin Bear mascot. The entire franchise was aimed at younger children with sleep problems (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018: 165). In the short film *The World of Teddy Ruxpin: Come Dream with Me Tonight* (dir. Brough, 1987), the gentle, lovable bear takes naughty children on a journey in a flying bed. The trip is monotonous, with lullabies heard in the back-

ground. As the children fly beyond the city, the teddy bear gives them good advice on sleep hygiene. The film ends with a shot of an open window. A boy and a girl are seen sleeping next to Ruxpin Bear. In *Fluppy Dogs* (dir. Wolf, 1986) – another film promoting mascots for young children, a flight out of a window on a bed takes place after stroking the head of a ‘fluppy dog’. The dreams of the flying bed revealed in both productions are associated with specific qualities: softness, warmth, and coziness. These qualities gain distinctiveness when juxtaposed with the coolness and open space outside. The solid frame of the furniture, the warm bedding, and the teddy bear provide a sphere of protection; a small safe sphere in which the sleeper can curl up and enjoy shelter from the cold and wind.

In this context, a similar fantasy is to imagine the bed as a boat or ship on stormy waters. Gaston Bachelard, unable to sleep in noisy Paris, visualized his bed as a boat condemned to the storms of the sea: “I talk to myself to give myself cheer: there now, your skiff is holding its own, you are safe in your stone boat. Sleep, in spite of the storm. Sleep in the storm” (Bachelard, 1994: 28). This type of fantasy about a flying boat or floating bed has more in common with the thoughts one experiences just before falling asleep than with typical nighttime dreams. It involves the need to sink into bed and enjoy one’s own patch of warmth in the middle of a cold, inhospitable world. Images of the bed as a safe haven surrounded by darkness and cold appear in films, fairy tales, and children’s literature. The subject of Robert Louis Stevenson’s poem *My Bed is a Boat* imagines his childhood bed as a ship sailing out to sea at night and arriving in a safe harbor in the morning. In the poem, ordinary objects (bed, pyjamas, toys) are transformed into a ship, a sailor’s uniform, and sea cargo. The darkness of the night and the sensation of sleep bring a soothing solitude; drifting in the depths of wide waters (Stevenson, 1889: 38).

In films, too, children float in and out of their homes. Dorothy in *Return to Oz* falls asleep during a nighttime flight in a wondrous chariot made of junk. She arranges herself on a worn-out sofa and rests her head against the soft feathers of her hen companion. The flying sofa is a small nest hanging above the vast, dangerous land<sup>4</sup>. In *The NeverEnding Story* (Petersen, 1984), the association of sleep with flight is more subtle. Atreyu takes a regenerative sleep, admittedly on land,

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy travels on a wonderful living flying machine. It consists of old furniture and time-worn decorative objects. Two sofas joined together by a string form a certain kind of “body” – a comfortable place to travel. The wings are the leaves of a potted plant, and the tail is a broom. The grotesque vehicle also has its own head – a dusty hunting trophy. The highlight is the emerald-coloured magic powder. After the girl sprinkles the shiny powder on the vehicle, it comes to life and flies out of the window. Just as the flying vehicle is made of ordinary things, all the magic in the Land of Oz comes from everyday practices of children. What else is the powder of life but a symbol of children’s inherent ability to animate objects?

but lies under the stars and in the arms of a furry dragon. This dragon would later serve as the boy's air transport.

Jerome Griswold, in his fascinating book, *Feeling like a kid*, lists the qualities that are revealed in children's literature. In addition to scariness, smallness, and aliveness, he mentions two elements: snugness and lightness. Snugness (often associated with a sleeping child's tableau) and lightness (usually attributed to flying) seem particularly interesting in the context of dreamy flight. Griswold notes that the motif of flight is much more common in children's literature than in adult fiction. In a way, it marks the different spiritual conditions ascribed to childhood and adulthood. Over time, grown-ups are deprived of the ability to fly. Stress and overwhelming responsibilities "weigh us down and make life seem more laborious" (Griswold: 90). Even sleep seems less cozy and comfortable as an adult. The fantasy films of the 1980s confirm this opposition.

### **Head in the clouds – flying eternal children**

The imagery associating a child's dreams with flying has several sources. Children's ideas about what a dream looks like and where it is located have long been recognized as significant. Jean Piaget showed that toddlers locate their dreams within their own rooms (Piaget, 1929: 90). More recent research shows that when asked to draw their dreams, young children often present them in the form of a 'balloon' suspended above the bed (Colace, 2010: 77). In the dream representations seen in children's drawings, the dreams 'levitate'.

It should be noted, however, that the fantasy of flying is a frequent subject of dreams, both for children and adults (Craig, 2018: 172; Szmigielska, 2002: 167). Sigmund Freud once asked, "Why do so many people dream that they are able to fly?" (Freud, 1916: 107). Referring to the connotations of the sexual act and flying that adults pass on to children (infants brought by storks, a penis referred to as a 'bird'), the psychoanalyst concludes that children's dreams of flying cover up another fantasy – the desire to be able, like an adult, to be sexually active (Freud: 108-109). According to Freud, children do not persist at all in some idyllic state of wish fulfilment. In fact, the child longs to grow up and be able to do what adults do. The infantile dream of flying is, therefore, a fantasy of a predisposition to sexual intercourse. According to the Freudian interpretation, the infantile daydream satisfies a desire not fulfilled on waking. An example of this simple compensation can be seen in one of the scenes of *Little Nemo...*, when, after being denied cake, the boy dreams of a trunk full of sweets.

It is worth asking, however, should a dream about a flying bed be considered as a

desire to ‘do what adults do’ (i.e., have sex)? In the framework of the poetics, sensibility, and stories of the films discussed in this article, a hypothesis situated as a counterpoint to Freudian conclusions seems more appropriate. Gaston Bachelard writes that “oneiric flight is often-contrary to what is taught by classic psychoanalysis-pure voluptuousness” (Bachelard, 1988:68). This means that the sensuality associated with dreams of flight is not of a sexual nature. Moreover, the fantasy of flight also expresses a desire to return to childhood, perceived as a state of innocence. The imagination associated with the air draws on youthful dreams, the sense of weightlessness experienced in dreams: “In dynamic imagination, the first flying creature in a dream is the dreamer himself. If someone or something accompanies him in flight, it is a sylph, a cloud, a shadow” (Bachelard: 73). In the pop culture version, the role of the sylph is taken over by Peter Pan or another magical playmate of the child.

The dream of flying is symptomatic of a wish not to grow up, argues Brigitte Brun, a psychoanalyst who works with fairy tale narratives and once cared for a patient who imagined that she could fly. The belief was so intense that Ruth, one of Brun’s patients, felt that at any moment she was able to detach herself from the ground and glide upwards:

The ‘flying’ symptom, for that is what we can call it, caused us difficulties at first, but when we combined it with the Peter Pan persona, it became much easier to work it through [...]. When I introduced this fairy tale character by asking Ruth: Do you know Peter Pan, she spontaneously replied: “I love this story!”, and something like tremendous relief sounded in her voice (Brun, 1995: 151).

According to the therapist, the fantasies about flying were symptomatic of a desire to regress to infancy (Brun: 146). Brun, citing Barrie’s associations, mentioned of an inner Neverland – a child’s private kingdom that must be left as she grows up in order not to lose touch with reality. Ruth did not want to give up her Neverland. Instead of standing firm on the ground, she was flying. At one stage of the therapy, the patient brought to the session a postcard with a reproduction of a painting by Marc Chagall – a painter of sky-flying who was as unwilling to grow up, like Ruth and Peter Pan. Based on the painter’s statements, Brun notes that Chagall, as a teenager, resisted adulthood and “would lie under the sofa, imagining himself flying over the rooftops” (Brun: 171)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> A similar observation – associating flying with rebellion against growing up – can be found in the psychobiography *Fantasies of Flight* by Daniel M. Ogilvie, in which the life and work of Chagall and Barrie are described through the artists’ prevailing dream of flying. (Ogilvie, 2004).

The thesis of the connection between the fantasy of flying and not growing up can be seen in the fantasy cinema of the 1980s, not only in children's films but also in teen films and coming-of-age films. In the cinema of this period, the power to fly is possessed by children and teenage boys, who are portrayed as eternally young. The fantasy comedy *The Heavenly Kid* (dir. Medoway, 1985) includes a scene in which a Guardian Angel (once a real teenager) shows up in a former girlfriend's bedroom and carries her off on a sentimental journey through the sky. Like Peter Pan, the title character leads his 'Wendy' out of the window, towards the stars.

A similar scene is also found in *The Boy Who Could Fly* (dir. Castle, 1986), a teen film that explores the fantasy of flying. The power to float is assigned to a boy on the autism spectrum. In the film, he is portrayed as a child, rather than as a teenager or young adult. Eric, with his arms raised at his sides, sits on the roof and imitates flight. Eventually, he really learned to fly. His dream of flying was shared by a girl watching her next-door neighbor from her bedroom window. At the side of the eternal boy, the young girl flies kites, reads stories about Peter Pan and Dumbo the flying elephant, and finally takes to the air. In the finale, the eternal boy disappears into the sky, and Millie expresses her hopes for the possibility of flying: "Maybe we can't soar up into the clouds, but somewhere, deep inside, we can all fly." The retention of the capacity for magical flight was also mentioned by Ruth, who, after therapy, described a past period of her life as "magical" while expressing a wish "that there will always be a little bit of magic in her life" (Brun: 172).

The cinema of the 1980s is affected by the Peter Pan syndrome (or Chagall's fixation, as well as Ruth's disease). The fantasy of flying that reveals itself in children's and adolescent films testifies – contrary to Freud's assertions – to an aversion to doing what adults do. After all, what is appealing about a world in which sleep is only meant to serve as rest before another hard day, and in which one has to close and open one's eyes at strictly scheduled times? Child protagonists are constantly reminded by their parents when and how they should go to sleep: "Having bad dreams? Oh Nemo, have you been sneaking dogs again?" (*Little Nemo...*); "Still up?" (*Fluppy Dogs*); "Go to sleep" (*Empire of the Sun*); "Lights out, sweetheart" (*The Blue Yonder*). Children try to escape this dull bedtime routine and dream on their own terms. When asleep, the protagonists are characterized by such a high degree of agency that they can even take flight. The anti-adolescence resistance realized in the imagery of oneiric flight is a positive force, directing the dreamer towards fantasy, understood as inner enrichment.

In the 1980s, the sky was teeming with children and teenage protagonists. For many of the characters, flying seems almost a natural consequence of their spiritual state. They are devoted to fantasy and have absolute faith in wonders. In *The NeverEnding*

*Story* Bastian's flight on the dragon of happiness is realized when the boy makes his first wish (the magical land of Fantasia is built from such wishes). The distributor's slogan for the film *The Boy Who Could Fly* states: "Wish hard enough ... love long enough ... and anything's possible." In the films of the 1980s, as in Barrie's novel, wishes, dreams, and all sorts of "lovely, wonderful thoughts" float children far away. All it takes is to leave the bedroom window open before going to sleep.

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**DJECA NA NEBU.  
LETEĆI SNOVI U FANTASTIČNIM FILMOVIMA  
80-IH GODINA 20. STOLJEĆA**

**Sažetak**

Članak se fokusira na analizu fantastičnih filmova 80-ih godina 20. stoljeća, u kojima je prisutan element dječjega čarobnog leta. Važno je da aeronautička orijentacija popularne kinematografije 80-ih godina nije samo šarmantan trik ili blještava atrakcija. Upućuje na specifično značenje: protivljenje odrastanju. Autorica se u tekstu ograđuje od teorije Sigmunda Freuda koji san o letenju smatra sinonimom za infantilne, neispunjene seksualne želje. Oslanjajući se na ideje psihoanalitičara snova i bajki (Gaston Bachelard, Brigitte Brun), autor tvrdi da mladi protagonisti ovih filmova bježe od adolescencije letenjem. U kinematografiji 80-ih godina još uvijek su se odvijali čarobni letovi pod tihim vodstvom Petra Pana.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** *fantastični filmovi 80-ih godina 20. stoljeća, leteće fantazije, leteća djeca, psihoanalitičko tumačenje snova, dijete u kinu*